



Amendment to the Specification

with its shank and an outturned annular flange 150 at the opposite end. Each sleeve 140 is threadedly shiftable along its respective shank 142a,b between an extended position as shown in Fig. 7 and a retracted position as shown in Fig. 8. Each shank 142a,b has an outturned annular flange 152a,b at one end 147a,b for abutting flange 148 on its overlying sleeve 140 to prevent the sleeve from unscrewing off the flange end of the shank. Sleeves 140 may be removed from shanks 142a,b by being unscrewed over the ends 149a,b of their respective shanks opposite flange ~~152~~ ^{152a, b.} Ring seals 154 are carried by flanges 152a,b to provide a seal between shanks 142a,b and their respective sleeves 140. Flanges 150 on sleeves 140 have circumferentially spaced longitudinal holes 156 therethrough which are alignable for inserting bolts 158 to secure the sleeves together when in their extended positions.

Outer coupler 138 is closed about inner coupler 122 by securing the opposing sleeves 140 together in their extended positions as shown in Fig. 7. To close outer coupler, sleeves 140 are screwed and shifted into their extended position over shanks 142a,b and secured together with bolts 158 and collars 144. With sleeves 140 in their extended position, holes 156 in opposing flanges 150 are aligned and bolts 158 secured through the aligned holes. Collars 144 are then screwed over the ends 149a,b of shanks 142a,b to tightly abut sleeves 140 when in their extended positions thereby preventing the connected sleeves from shifting relative to the shanks. A gasket or other seal mechanism 160 is interposed between the extended sleeves 140 to provide a seal therebetween.

When it is desired to access inner coupler 122, outer coupler 138 is opened to expose the inner coupler. To open outer coupler, sleeves 140 are unscrewed and shifted to their retracted position as seen in Fig. 8 by first unscrewing collars 144 over ends 149a,b of shanks 142a,b, then removing bolts 158 from holes 156, and finally unscrewing the sleeves toward ends 149a,b of the